

(2) congratulates Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the Nation for their ongoing contributions to education, and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this Nation.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

##### COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 14, 2001, at 11 a.m., in closed session to receive a briefing from the navy on the submarine accident near Hawaii.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 14, 2001, to conduct a hearing on "Establishing an Effective, Modern Framework for Export Controls."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 14, 2001, to conduct a hearing on "Saving Investors Money and Strengthening the SEC."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 14, 2001, to hear testimony regarding Education Tax and Savings Incentives.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a hearing on Wednesday, February 14, 2001 at 10 a.m. in SD226.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Communications of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet on Wednesday, February 14, 2001, at 9:30 a.m. on ICANN Governance.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO MEXICO

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 13 that I submitted earlier.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 13) expressing the sense of Congress with respect to the upcoming trip of President George W. Bush to Mexico to meet with newly elected President Vicente Fox, and with respect to future cooperative efforts between the United States and Mexico.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, we are facing a unique time in the history of U.S.-Mexico relations. Mexico's election and inauguration last year of an opposition candidate as president—Vicente Fox Quesada—has overturned 71 years of executive branch domination by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI. And now, with the inauguration of our new president—George W. Bush—both nations have the unprecedented opportunity to implement positive changes and create lasting progress for our entire Western Hemisphere.

Because of Mexico's critical importance to our nation and hemisphere, it is not at all surprising that President Bush has chosen to travel to Mexico for his first official foreign trip as President. It is with that in mind that I am introducing a resolution today, along with Senators HELMS, LOTT, DODD, MCCAIN, LANDRIEU, GRASSLEY, BREAUX, CHAFEE, VOINOVICH, and LEAHY to express our bipartisan interest in America's current relationship with Mexico and to suggest several issues of particular importance that President Bush should raise during his upcoming meeting with President Fox.

Our resolution acknowledges the vital nature of our relationship with Mexico and calls for policies that promote cooperation, enhance the security and prosperity of both nations, and enable both countries to establish mutually agreed-upon goals in at least four areas: one, economic development and trade; two, the environment; three, immigration; and, four, law enforcement and counter-drug policy.

In each of these areas, both countries should pursue realistic and practical steps that will build confidence in our partnership and help set the stage for future discussions and future progress.

No one can deny the importance of our involvement with Mexico—a nation with which we share over 2,000 miles of common borders. Additionally, over 21.4 million Americans living in this country are of Mexican heritage—that's 67 percent of our total U.S.

Latino population. Indeed, many people and many issues bind our nations together. And, it is in both nations' interest to make that bond even stronger.

That is why we want to see President Fox succeed. And, he is off to a good start. For the first time in two decades, economic crisis has not marred Mexico's transition period in between presidencies. Instead, President Fox's election has been received as a positive step in Mexico's maturing economy and has fueled new investment in the country, raising expectations for better economic opportunities for the Mexican people.

President Fox's election also has raised expectations here in Washington for better opportunities to improve U.S.-Mexico bilateral cooperation on a wide range of issues. An advocate of free trade in the Americas, President Fox currently recognizes that a strong, steady economy in Mexico can be the foundation to help solve many of our shared challenges, such as immigration, environmental quality, violent crime, and drug trafficking.

Furthermore, thanks to the economic cooperation spearheaded by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), trade between the United States and Mexico amounts to \$200 billion annually, making our neighbor to the south our second largest trading partner behind Canada. Over the last decade, U.S. exports to Mexico have increased by 207 percent. In 1999, alone, the United States exported \$86.9 billion to Mexico—that is more than we exported to France, Germany, and the United Kingdom combined: \$84.1 billion!

Overall progress in our partnership cannot occur, though, absent continued progress in Mexico's economy. Although Mexico is in its fifth consecutive year of recovery following the 1994-1995 peso crisis, improved living standards and economic opportunities have not been felt nationwide. Lack of jobs and depressed wages are particularly acute in the interior of the country, even in President Fox's home state of Guanajuato. As long as enormous disparities in wages and living conditions exist between the United States and Mexico, our own nation will not fully realize the potential of Mexico as an export market nor will we be able to deal adequately with the resulting problems of illegal immigration, border crime, and drug trafficking.

In keeping with the market-oriented approach we began with NAFTA, the United States can take a number of constructive steps to continue economic progress in Mexico and secure its support for a Free Trade Agreement with the Americas:

First, we can encourage growth and development by devising, for example, a common strategy to improve the flow of credit and U.S. investment opportunities in Mexico and by increasing